

Serial No. 09/772,172  
Art Unit 1771

**Claims:**

1 - 11 (previously canceled).

12. (currently amended) An ice breaker mat comprising:

a substantially flat compressible core constructed of a material that maintains its compressibility in sub-freezing temperatures;

a waterproof flexible cover ~~folded in half, each half being slightly larger than said core, said cover being~~ of a material that retains its flexibility in sub-freezing temperature, said cover having a rounded folded edge defining overlying upper and lower surfaces of substantially similar size with said core positioned therebetween, said surfaces being slightly larger than said core so that the peripheral edges of said cover, not including the folded edge, abut each other;

means sealing said peripheral edges ~~said core being positioned within said folded cover with the peripheral edges of said cover, not including the folded edge, being sealed to each other to provide a snug, airtight enclosure for said core;~~

said cover being of a dark, sun-absorbing color and having a finely textured non-slip pattern over its entire outer surface so that said mat is reversible in use;

whereby when ice or frozen snow covers said mat, the weight of a person standing thereon causes the mat to compress, thus cracking the ice or frozen snow to facilitate removal thereof from the mat.

13. (currently amended) The mat of claim ~~44~~ 12 wherein said core is coated with an adhesive material that secures the core to said cover to prevent relative movement therebetween.

14. (currently amended) The mat of claim ~~44~~ 12 wherein the color of said cover is black.

15. (currently amended) The mat of claim ~~44~~ 12 wherein said cover is made of a polyvinyl chloride material and said core is made of a ~~urethane~~ foam material.

16. (currently amended) The mat of claim ~~44~~ 12 further comprising means for securing said mat to the horizontal portions of a flight of outdoor ~~stairs~~ steps, with the rounded front edge of the mat located adjacent the front edge of the step on which it is mounted.